

Solace

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Summary: BtVS xover. Doyle comes back from the dead and sees something that drives him away from LA and away from his friends. Then he meets a certain blonde Slayer...

Solace

"Steely resolve...Is falling from me...My poor soul...All bruised passivity...All your regrets...Ride rough-shod over me...I'm so glad....That we're strangers when we meet."Â (David Bowie)

>
 Doyle

>
 As I lay there, cradled in the strong warmth of her arms, I pondered the strange chain of events that led me to this moment and this woman. Her golden hair was sweaty and tangled from our earlier activities and her skin, free of any makeup, looked pale under the harsh glow of the neon lights from outside the window. But to me, she was the most beautiful sight I had ever beheld in my entire life.

>
 I wondered for the umpteenth time what she had seen in me. I'm not that great looking. I'm of average build and average height; my features are pretty plain. And my fashion sense leaves something to be desired, or so I am told. In fact, the only thing that really stands out about me at all is my eyes. They're the same blue eyes that my mother had, the same blue eyes that attracted my father to her despite theirâ€| erâ€| differences.

>
 I was distracted from my thoughts by the movement of her body under the sheets as she rolled over onto her side. Her leg touched my own briefly and I shivered at the feel of her smooth skin against mine. Her back was to me now as she lay on her side, one arm tucked underneath her head. She snored softly. I slipped my arms around her waist and pulled her close to me, being careful not to wake her, and inhaled the scent that was so uniquely *her*. I sighed, content to just lay there with her in my arms. But I knew this perfect moment couldn't last. The real world would intrude on it eventually. It always did.

>
 2 Months Earlierâ€|

>
 Maybe it's just me, but I always thought that my big welcome

home party would be a little bit different than this. I had all kinds of scenarios planned out, most of them involving myself and Cordelia Chase in as few clothes as possible. But that's not quite how it turned out.

>
 I was sore, tired and not in a very good mood, despite my miraculous return to the land of the living.Â I just wanted a hot shower and a good night's rest, which would hopefully be in 'Delia's lovely arms.

>
 As I climbed the front steps and made my way into the building that housed Angel Investigations, I saw Cordelia walking into the office just a few feet in front of me. I thought about calling out to her, but I didn't want to frighten her. So I just walked up to the window slowly and peeked in, trying to get a feel for what things were like now in my best friends' lives. I didn't want to just barge in without scoping out the scene first. I've always been overly cautious. Fault my mum's strict upbringing, if you want to. Or all the hard times I've lived through. Or maybe a combination of the two. Doesn't matter, really. What does matter is what I saw when I looked through that window. It was something I'd never expected to see, not in a million years.

>
 Angel and Cordelia kissing.

>
 I wanted to turn away, but my feet seemed to be stuck to the floor. As I watched, the kiss continued for what seemed like forever, but was probably only a few moments. Then they broke apart and Cordelia looked deeply into Angel's eyes, as if she was searching for something dearly important to her. Angel himself looked surprised and shocked, but not unhappy.

>
 Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. I whirled around and ran down the hallway, feet pounding on the chipped tiles in the floor. I didn't care if they heard me or not. I just had to get out of that building.

>
 Now flash forward a few months. I've been wandering around aimlessly, drifting from place to place like some kind of drunken Irish vagabond. A day didn't go by that I wasn't busy getting myself bolloxed.Â Blowing my money on the black stuff and then betting on a race here and there to get some extra cash. Basically throwing my life down the toilet. I've always been fairly good at that. It's a gift, I suppose. Some people are great successes and go on to live happy, fulfilling lives, but meâ€¦ I just fail miserably and turn into a mouldy git. It's kind of a crappy gift now that I think about it.

>
 I was sitting in a small bar in Las Vegas, Nevada, drowning my sorrows in a mug of foul tasting beer, when I first saw her. I recognized her immediately, of course. It's all the fault of those cursed visions. Once you know all the intimate details of a young girl's love affair with a souled vampire, it's hard to forget her face. Especially when she's drop dead gorgeous (no pun intended) and a very successful vampire slayer.

>
 I watched her walk inside and head straight for the bar. She plopped down on the stool next to mine and ordered a beer. The bartender didn't ask for ID, they never do in joints like these, and she didn't offer to show him any. Once he'd set the cold mug of beer in front of her, the bartender moved to help someone else, leaving us alone at this end of the bar.

>
 I couldn't keep my eyes off of her, but if she noticed me staring, she didn't say anything. She was so beautiful and yet so sad. Her eyes were old beyond her years and her shoulders sagged, as if they bore the weight of the world on a regular basis, which, in fact, they probably did.

>
 I wanted to say something to her. Anything. Just as long as it

would lead to a conversation with her. But I was too chicken. I couldn't get up the courage to even say hello. How pathetic. I sighed, turning back to my drink.

>
 And that was when she spoke. "Well, are you going to introduce yourself or just keep staring at me all night?"

>

> Buffy

>
 Life sucks. That should be my new motto. It fits in pretty nicely with the way my life is going right now. Here's the short version: My first love dumped me and moved to LA, my second love slept with my worst enemy which brought that relationship to a grinding halt, and to top it all off, we've discovered that there's a new bad guy named Adam who will probably want to send the Earth on a one way trip to hell in the near future. Of course, then I'll have to play the role of savior, protecting the weak and saving the world from certain doom. Need I tell you how much fun that is not? I repeat: Life sucks.

>
 I finally couldn't take it anymore. Everything was just rubbing me the wrong way. I had to get out, get some distance. I talked to Giles about it and, while he understandably wasn't too thrilled with the idea of me going off on a road trip by myself via Greyhound, he didn't try to stop me. I think the fact that I went and told him about my plans before I left made him realize that I would definitely be coming back this time. I didn't say goodbye to anyone else, most especially Riley. That would have been too hard. So I left them each a letter, explaining things to them so they'd understand why I had to go. I hope they don't hold this against me later.

>
 I finally ran out of money when I hit Las Vegas, of all places. No more bus rides for Buffy. I guess it's a good thing these boots were made for walking. They managed to walk me for a pretty good stretch before I had to stop and take a load off. I saw a seedy looking bar across the street, it's door was hanging on one hinge and the neon letters that made up its sign kept flickering on and off erratically. It would be perfect. I could forget myself there.

>
 I crossed the street quickly, dodging traffic with a grace and ease that only the slayer could possess, and pushed my way inside the joint. I headed straight for the bar, ordered a beer and took a seat next to some guy that looked vaguely familiar.

>
 Suddenly, I had the strangest sense of deja' vu, as if I'd been here before or something. But I shook it off and took a sip of my beer, wincing at the bitter taste. Unlike my previous experiences with beer, this was actually pretty disgusting. But it gave me a slight buzz, so I continued drinking it.

>
 I could tell that the guy sitting next to me was staring, but I didn't care. It actually made me feel nice and tingly inside to catch his piercing blue eyes roaming over my body from time to time. I wondered if he would ever get up enough courage to speak to me, since he obviously wanted to.

>
 Finally, I took pity on him. Giving him one of my sexy half-smiles, I said, "Well, are you going to introduce yourself or just keep staring at me all night?" I kept my tone light, making sure he knew I was only teasing him.

>
 He chuckled and replied, "Would it bother you if I decided to just keep looking at you all night, regardless? I can't say I'd mind gazing at a fine thing such as yourself for hours on end." His Irish brogue was surprising -- I'd just assumed he was an American -- but also extremely sexy. I was struck again by that feeling of familiarity, but I couldn't pin point exactly what it was about him that caused me to feel that way.

>
 I shrugged, trying to act casual by running the tips of my

fingers along the brim of my glass, and slanted an appraising look at him from underneath my lashes. He wasn't bad to look at, not by a long shot. He was one of those guys that seemed to fade away in a crowd, but something about him told me that he hadn't always been that way. Something in his eyes, some hidden pain, seemed to speak of a time when he had been outgoing and lively. But somethingâ€¦ or someoneâ€¦ had changed that. In a way, he reminded me of myself and how I felt knowing that Riley had slept with Faith. Suddenly, I felt as though I knew this stranger better than I knew anyone else in the world. And that was a little scary, in an exciting way.

>
 Coming to a decision, I pushed my mug of bad beer away and turned on my stool to face him. "My name isâ€¦ Anne." I wasn't sure why I felt compelled to keep my real name a secret; it was a gut feeling, but I didn't question it. I smiled at him, reaching out and touching his hand. "Aren't you going to tell me your name?"

>
 He turned to face me, his eyes searching mine as if he was looking for something. I tilted my head to the side, wondering what in the world he was thinking right now and half scared he was just trying to think of a way to get rid of me without making a scene. But then he smiled and said, "My name's Alan."

>
 He threw a crumpled wad of bills on the counter for the bartender and grabbed my hand. Normally, I would have pulled my hand away and slapped him for being so forward. But I didn't. Instead I found myself rising to my feet along with him.

>
 "Would you like to get outta here, lass?" he asked. His hand was warm against mine. It felt nice.

>
 I nodded, not speaking, and let him lead me out of the bar and onto the brightly-lit streets. We walked for a long time, neither speaking, our hands still intertwined. I didn't ask him where he was taking me, and he didn't jump forth with the information.

>
 Soon, we were outside of an old, run-down motel. He stopped and looked at me, a thousand questions lurking in those beautiful blue eyes. It was the first time since we'd left the bar that he looked at all uncertain.

>
 "Umâ€¦ would youâ€¦ maybeâ€¦ like toâ€¦" he stuttered, letting go of my hand.

>
 I didn't say anything. I just leaned in and kissed him. It was something I'd been wanting to do ever since he first spoke to me in the bar. He tasted of alcohol, but I didn't mind. His lips were soft against mine. I ran my fingers through his hair, tugging gently on the hairs at the nape of his neck. I coaxed his mouth open with my tongue and he moaned before finally breaking away from me.

>
 He looked at me for a long moment, his breath was coming in soft pants and his cheeks were flushed. Damn if he wasn't extremely sexy. But why was he just standing there, staring at me? It was as if he was waging some kind of inner war. I idly wondered which side was going to win as I ran my fingers down his chest. His t-shirt moved beneath my fingertips, and I found myself wishing that he would take it off.

>
 I heard him mumble something that sounded strangely like "She doesn't know" but I wasn't paying attention. Didn't he realize that I didn't want to think things through right now? I just wanted to act on my feelings, consequences be damned!

>
 He sighed, and something flashed in his eyes. Something *alive*. Grabbing my hand again, he led me into the motel and straight to a room on the second floor. As he unlocked the door with shaking hands, I waited impatiently, twisting the strap of my purse between my fingers. Then the door was open and he was leading me inside. My purse dropped on the floor, soon forgotten, as he pulled me into his arms and kicked the door shut. His lips met mine and soon

all thoughts had flown from my head. All I could do was concentrate on how he was making me feel.

>
 His hands roamed over my body like he owned it, quickly removing my coat and concentrating on my shirt. I pulled his t-shirt over his head and splayed my hands across his muscular chest, relishing the feel of his skin beneath my fingers. We collapsed on the bed in a tangle of limbs, our mouths coming together again. I briefly thought of Riley, but pushed those thoughts away, along with the guilt they brought with them. I was only doing what Riley had done, after all. And Alan was making me feel so aliveâ€¦ something that Riley had never done.

>
 But then I felt Alan's fingers at the buttons of my jeans and all thoughts left my head for quite some timeâ€¦

>
 Doyle

>
 Wonderful. That's a poor word to describe how Buffy Summers made me feel when we were together. That's the understatement of the year. It bothered me at first that she didn't recognize me and that she used a fake name, but then I realized that she was running away from something. And she needed someone who would let her hide with them for a bit, before she was forced to go back to reality. I was glad I could do that for her. I just wish I could do more.

>
 I thought several times about telling her who I really was, but that would ruin what we had shared. This wasn't about Angel or our pasts or her being a slayer and me being half demon. This was about two lonely people who needed to feel loved, even just for one night.

>
 I sighed and slipped out of her arms, grabbing my shirt and pulling it over my head. I reached for my jeans and pulled them on, fingers doing up the buttons with practiced ease. Then I looked back down at her beautiful face, so peaceful in sleep. I reached down and brushed a strand of golden hair out of her eyes, my fingers lingering near her cheek.

>
 "Thank you," I murmured, placing my last gift to her on the pillow beside her head, along with the keys to the room. Then I gathered my courage and walked out the door, not allowing myself the luxury of looking back.

>
 Buffy

>
 It was laying on his pillow, the first thing I saw when I opened my eyes. I smiled, already certain that he was gone and that I would probably never see him again. But that was for the best.

>
 As I ran my fingers over the contours of the beautiful orchid's petals - I was glad he didn't leave me a red rose, that would have been too clichÃ©d -- I sighed, suddenly wishing that I'd told him my real name.

>
 To be continued in part two of the series: "Distance."

End
file.